Beyond boundaries: reasoning on transformative spatial practices

Sub-Saharan Africa; rising middle class; urban vulnerability; spatial practices.
A significantly different Geopolitical landscape
Demographic growth
A totally urban-based economic growth
Structural changes in economy & employment
Urban transition

Are all factors that are mentioned as economically empowering the society through a GROWING URBAN MIDDLE CLASS

“The decade 2000-2010 has been also defined as the turning point for African cities”
“......by 2025 “three out of every five African countries will be middle-income”

African cities still labelled as dualistic and conflictual places

Have become the MAIN FOCUSES OF THE INTERNATIONAL URBAN DEBATE

AND

Are also addressed as an opportunity FOR NEW ADAPTIVE URBAN FORMS

Little improvements in inequality reduction

Anna Mazzolini – Urban planner for developing countries
OLD concepts for NEW CITIES

Despite of the renewal interest on African urbanities as sites of economic rise, some western-driven still standing dichotomies fail to recognize that this rise is posing a **totally new set of urban vulnerability challenges**. By making light on that,

- **NEW URBAN BEHAVIOURS**
  
- **NEW VULNERABILITY PATTERNS**

The overall objective of the research is to make light on some theoretical gaps in considering **African contemporary urban resilience practices derived from the fast socio-economic changes**.
THE VAUNTED INCOME-RELATED RISE

Just the label changed, on the basis of "some innovative statistics"

“Inflows and outflows are so frequent”

“It’s like entering a revolving door”

A TOTALLY NEW SET OF URBAN INEQUALITY CHALLENGES

A "FLOATING" RISE

198.7 million are considered to be ‘floating’ and are at risk of falling out of the middle class and back into poverty. Combined with the stable middle class, they make up the current 326.6 million.

Anna Mazzolini – Urban planner for developing countries
The urban behaviour of the much-vaulted new economic subject of the rising middle class in terms of its self-made spatial practices or spatial transformations, and consequently in terms of urban vulnerability implies a theoretical revision of the following concepts:

- Resilience
- Social Inclusion
- Right to the City
- Accessibility

METHODOLOGY

- A more realistic reconsideration of the actual thresholds to define the present social classes (avoiding any kind of income-related limitations defining who is out of poverty or, in other terms, out of "informality");

- A spatial-based analysis conducting towards a new understanding of some emergent urban practices;

- The reassessment of some proxies in considering what is urban vulnerability for this new social subject and, consequently, for other social segments.
 WHICH KIND OF ANALYSIS?

- **Planning tools** (in legal and institutional terms) and their relationship with the emergence of the middle class in urban and peri-urban;

- **New actors and new partnerships** (eg. construction companies or individuals generally dealing with housing provision for the new middle class);

- **Demand for land** and urban services;

- **Demand for housing**: financial arrangements for the purchase or construction of a new home for the new middle class and identification of responsible actors or programmes/policies for social housing, in particular if talking about the lower-middle class.
1) The emerging middle class and the **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INFORMAL SECTOR** in urban and peri-urban areas: Concepts that until now have been associated to the urban informality are now becoming characteristics of the urban behaviour of the emerging class, trying to reach access to urban space and services.

2) The emerging middle class and the **“SOUTHERN URBANISM”** concept - the need for a new research agenda:

- How does the new urban middle class develop its own mechanisms of space production and how does it manage and live its urban life?
- How is evolving the ‘African suburbanism’ theoretical concept of in this fast-changing context?
- Analysis of the concepts of 'pseudo-suburbanization' and the urban-rural relationship;
- Which new kinds of urban forms and landscapes?

**BECAUSE IT IS THE SPECIFIC RISING SOCIAL SEGMENT THAT HOLDS THE POSSIBILITIES OF INFLUENCING PLANNING POLICIES WITH STRONG CONSEQUENCES ON THE POOREST CLASSES**
The emerging middle class is increasingly showing HYBRID ATTITUDES for its urban life, in some ways closely comparable with those of the urban poor;

What is lacking is the SENSIBLENESS about the forthcoming consequences of these attitudes, as this social segment can (much more rapidly than the urban poor) lead to an important process of change of the urban space. With improved economic means, mobility, some possibility of long-term investments, etc., they act between the formal and the informal, rapidly modifying the "proto-urban" and informal concepts.

How will this attitudes evolve and how will the LOCAL AUTHORITIES authorities react? In which ways will the SLUM UPGRADING STRATEGIES and SOCIAL HOUSING POLICIES be affected?
HOUSING MATTERS!

ACCESS TO HOUSING AS AN INDICATOR FOR NEW URBAN AND PLANNING RESEARCH AGENDAS
FIELD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

(EMERGING URBAN PRACTICES - URBAN “POORS” AND MIDDLE CLASSES)

- Identification of the new settlement areas for the emerging middle class and urban expansion areas (both spontaneous or formally planned);
- Analysis of mobility/peri-urban and rural-urban migration patterns;
- Analysis of social housing policies and subsidies;
- Studies and interviews about some “hybrid” urban behaviours, in particular: incremental building and inverse governmentality modalities.
WHY MAPUTO?

Maputo is recently described as a particular urban development where the “failed state control” in terms of planning is generating and various forms of versatile and dynamic urban forms and non-state planning practices.

1. The city shows a rapid rising of socio-economic urban mix, both in formal and informal areas, derived and obtained through a heterogeneous set of spatial and political practices.

2. Because of its wide emerging middle class but increasing housing constraints.

3. Because of the recent policy trends/instruments that widely involve urban poors and modify the perception of urban poverty and vulnerability:

   - New detailed urbanization plans that seek to better regulate urban land in neighborhoods of recent development due to infrastructure projects;
   - A new "wave" of slum upgrading projects of informal neighborhoods;
SOME NEW SETTLING-DOWN TRENDS

- LARGE SCALE INVESTMENTS (INFRASTRUCTURES AND HOUSING)
- "CONDOMINIOS"
- EMERGING TYPOLOGICAL MIX IN PERI-URBAN OR "INFORMAL" AREAS

URBAN FABRIC ALTERATION TRENDS

- TYPOLOGICAL RENOVATION WITHIN THE "CEMENT" CITY (SLOW RETURN TO THE CITY CENTRE)
- TYPOLOGICAL MIX WITHIN THE URBAN BOUNDARY – SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMERGING MIX
- NEW "SOCIAL HOUSING" SETTLEMENTS LACKING OF SERVICES OR BASIC INFRASTRUCTURES
- EXODUS FROM CENTRAL URBAN AREAS THROUGH NEW SATELLITE AREAS OR DESTINATIONS
AREAS THAT INDIRECTLY ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF SOME HOUSING PROJECTS
AREAS CHARACTERIZED BY INCREASING “BUY AND SELL” INFORMAL ACTIONS

Formal-informal limit between Polana Caniço and Sommershield
A part of the new middle class tends to enter into direct agreements with families living in the "border" between the formal and informal, beginning, therefore, an expansion of the formal grid to get a space to build. The houses are bought together with the DUAT (Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra) and are subsequently eliminated to make room for “luxury” dwellings.
AREAS CHARACTERIZED BY AN INCREASING MIX OF MIDDLE CLASS HOUSING AND INFORMAL DWELLINGS

PILOT AREAS OF URBAN RENEWAL (SLUM UPGRADE, LOTTING OR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS), DUE TO THE NEW INTEREST OF THE MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS TOWARDS THESE URBAN LOCATIONS
MAIN AREA OF LAND CONFLICTS FOR PERI-URBAN SPACES

MAIN AREAS CHARACTERIZED BY THE “INVERSE GOVERNMENTALITY” MODALITY OF SPACE PRODUCTION

HOUSING MATTERS – OLD AND NEW TRENDS IN SETTLING DOWN IN THE CITY – THE CASE OF MAPUTO

WHAT IS IT?
WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?
WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?
WHY DOES IT WORK SO WELL?
Inverse governmentality

Incremental building

They are actions that make feel in a "safe" condition those inhabitants belonging to middle and lower-middle classes, regarding the the rights they have on their lot or house.

These actions do not directly please for administration approval; rather they are a sort of spatial "declaration" of a specific and more stable social status.

Buying lots in informal areas through direct agreements *

Extension of the formal “grid”

These kind of urban behaviours could foster the development of infrastructural projects in informal areas, due to the renewed interest of middle and higher class

On the other hand, it could cause the worsening of exclusionary dynamics for the poorest classes, dislocated even farther from the city center.

*Middle and Lower-Middle Class

*In the past, from ‘80, this dynamic was characteristic of economic and political and economic elites. Nowadays, it is more and more a phenomenon related to the middle class.

Anna Mazzolini – Urban planner for developing countries
MIDDLE AND LOWER-MIDDLE CLASSES

INCREMENTAL BUILDING

INVERSE GOVERNMENTALITY

MIDDLE AND MIDDLE-HIGHER CLASSES

ILLEGAL BUYINGS AND SELLINGS OF LOTS IN INFORMAL AREAS

EXPANSION OF “FORMAL” BOUNDARIES THROUGH LEGAL OR ILLEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Anna Mazzolini – Urban planner for developing countries
MAIN RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Which kind of predictability for the forthcoming urban landscape?

Consequences in terms of planning policies?

The spatial and political responses from the formal authorities will predict the future urban expansion and conformation (Eg. lots legalization policies VS social housing)

Necessity of a brand new framework related to urban accessibility, inclusion and urban poverty

Vacillation of middle class emphasis
MAIN RESEARCH INSIGHTS

- How is the so-called "fuzzy area" evolving regarding access to land and housing?

- Which kind of actions/plans/policies actually reflect the abovementioned trends? Or, on the other hand, are the political responses still laying on an unconscious (not declared) level?

- In informal areas, which kind of consequences will have the increasing “switch” from strategic actions (slum upgrading strategies, sites and services, etc) towards more spatial-based solutions (redevelopment plans)?

- A great part of the middle class operates "outside" the administrative rules, trying to avoid any kind of interference by the state (or "hiding "from it), to reflect its cultural, social and economic status into a specific spatial dimension. Could this lead back to a “government” approach than a governance one, in terms of planning?
CONCLUDING REMARKS – ACCESSIBILITY AND HOUSING AS NEW PROXIES

A more realistic reevaluation of the actual thresholds to define the present social classes (avoiding any kind of income-related limitations defining who is out of poverty or, in other terms, out of "informality"), and a spatial-based analysis towards a new understanding of some emergent urban practices could help filling the current theoretical gaps in terms of Sub-Saharan African current urban trends.

Inverse governmentality (illegally) imitating the state

Illegal buying of lots in peri-urban areas

Mortgage solutions
To pay attention and wonder how to satisfy the basic needs of all currently present and evolving social segments.

To analyze the new class’ severe shortages and affordability constraints.

To wonder how to introduce new tools for the urban inclusion and economic empowerment of the new class, as these policies are supposed to act partly differently from the upgrading strategies aiming at reducing poverty, so they require:

- MUCH STRONGER POLITICAL WILL;
- MORE STATE INTERVENTIONS;
- HUGE MARKET STRUCTURAL CHANGES

A positive REBOUND IMPACT on the urban poor, which could eventually alleviate or even remove certain constraints currently preventing them from entering the floating class.

CONCLUDING REMARKS – ACCESSIBILITY AND HOUSING AS NEW PROXIES - IMPLICATIONS FOR THE URBAN VULNERABILITY SCENARIO
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